Trope: Food Critic AU (Hannigram AU)

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/12204594.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Abigail Hobbs
Additional Tags:	Tropes, Food Critic, Alternate Universe - Food Service, Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Omega Verse, Alpha/Omega, Omega Hannibal Lecter, Alpha Will Graham, Will is a purveyor of hot dogs, Hannibal is a famous food critic, Secret Identity, Dating, Cannibalism, Murder, you know - the usual, Explicit Sexual Content, what with the knotting and all, Bonding, Happy Ending, Podfic Welcome, do not copy to another site, can be read as traditional or multisex omega
Language:	English
Series:	Part 17 of Trope Trope: Exploring fic tropes in an Omegaverse setting, Part 50 of ABO/Omegaverse Fics by TigerPrawn, Part 35 of Tiger's Hannigram AU fics
Stats:	Published: 2017-09-27 Words: 6,675 Chapters: 1/1

Trope: Food Critic AU (Hannigram AU)

by TigerPrawn

Summary

Hannibal would never normally lower himself to common street food, and yet not only does he, but he keeps going back for more - and it certainly isn't for the quality of the hot dogs.

Will is feeling pretty flattered by his new regular, but little does he know that the blushing omega he sees almost daily, is famed food critic Hannibal Lecter. And that isn't all he's hiding from Will.

Notes

Prompt fill. Massive love to the Knitting Circle - the idea for this one was born from a random late night discussion that stuck in my head XD

Famed food critic, Hannibal Lecter, was not averse to trying street food. He had sampled some very fine examples on travels through Eastern Europe and Asia. But in the United States - beyond events set up specifically catering to the connoisseur - he would never be remotely tempted.

Or so he thought.

It was his third day passing the extremely beautiful man serving hot dogs in a slightly beat up old van parked too close for his liking to his office, that Hannibal stopped - feeling compelled to make a purchase. There was something about the alpha, not least the enticing scent that he could just about trace through the kitchen odours.

He immediately regretted stopping, of course. Not for the food, no he didn't even attempt to taste such an offensive smelling *cuisine*. But for the fool he made of himself in front of the beautiful and sweet smelling alpha that served him the hot dog he had no intention of consuming. He stammered his way through his order and even blushed.

Hannibal liked to consider that he wasn't the stereotypical omega, and yet he felt like a teenager going through the awkward years of secondary puberty all over again as the alpha, gruff and seemingly annoyed, waited on him.

*

The first day he had bought a hot dog, Will had quirked a curious brow at the omega. He was certainly different than his usual customers - he was one of those nicely turned out omegas. Probably had some rich alpha mooning over him and giving him whatever he wanted as long as he walked around their home naked except for a jewelled omegan collar. Will scoffed at the idea that was all too easy to imagine for this coiffed and suited omega that had more airs and graces than Will had ever known. The foreign accent also made him consider that the omega could possibly even be in the US via an arranged marriage.

Collared omegas and arranged marriages weren't exactly the norm - hadn't been for decades and yet they did happen, and this omega really spoke of it in Will's mind. For someone who sold hot dogs for a living he was cursed with too much imagination. It was all too easy to fantasise backstories for his customers to keep himself entertained.

This omega - *Collared Jewel* - as Will named him in his mind, was very much ripe for that. In fact Will's imagination ran riot before settling on his decided story: brought over in his youth in an arranged marriage, Jewel spoke only his mother tongue until he learned over the years from his kindly, older alpha. Yes an alpha that treated him well and gave him anything he could possibly want in return for a traditional omega in the home. The older alpha had died… no he *was* dying and had encouraged his omega to dress up in his nice suits and go out and about to make friends and find future prospects in preparation for the sad event. Of course, money would never be an issue - kindly alpha would leave his fortune - but the alpha wouldn't want Jewel to be lonely and unknotted.

The third week the omega came by the hot dog stand, with a little more confidence than he had shown before - and the glint of something beneath - Will edited his story.

Kindly alpha was actually a bit of an asshole - an older traditionalist. And Jewel was clearly willful. And maybe a little manipulative. Yeah, asshole alpha was dying and now Jewel took himself out and about to find his next prospect. And Will was sure he would make his own way quite well - he wasn't anybody's fool. Good for him!

The fifth week he served the omega, this story now firmly in his mind, he couldn't help but smile at Jewel. If he was actually an alpha of any note or means perhaps he should worry about being manipulated into being this omega's next meal ticket. But as it was, with only his ex's damn hot dog stand to his name, he had nothing to worry about. The smile was conspiratorial. Jewel's secret was safe with Will.

The sixth week Will served the omega, he corrected the story immediately in his head and felt his cheeks burn as he did so. This time the omega - perhaps encouraged by Will's previous smiles - became bolder and broke through his apparent bashfulness. There was a change in the short conversations they'd had up until this point - the curious enquiries the omega had made about Will, his business, his produce. Will had just figured the guy really liked hot dogs, but he had to reevaluate.

Until this point the omega had made little more than polite conversation, but this time he was emboldened. Will could even scent it - a rich aroma of power and desire from the omega that made Will blush for a change, and… something else. Something familiar and necessary that made Will's heart jump. The tables had turned, and Jewel's backstory abruptly disintegrated in Will's mind as the omega near purred -

"I don't mean to be forward, but would you consider having dinner with me sometime? I must tell you that I am more than happy to pay - as it is my invitation - but if you are not an alpha who can allow an omega to pay for dinner you must say so now."

Will's mouth had run dry and his palms went clammy as he took in the confident and beautiful omega before him… and that rich scent.

A new story wrote itself in his mind, now able to see the man utterly and completely. His history, likely hidden from most, was written clearly. A history of great fortune and misfortune. A privileged omega who had experienced devastating loss before having to make his own way in the world. Fiercely intelligent and taking his own independence as a given as he sought a new life in the US. He was manipulative, yes. Cold, calculating - all because he had needed to be. He'd had to remake his own fortune, provide for himself and had no wish to be beholden to any alpha. It was so suddenly clear that it took the breath out of Will as though struck in the chest by the pendulum that swung in his mind as he recalculated this story. And that was barely a scratch to the surface, Will knew.

"Yes… dinner." Will nodded, the words falling abruptly from his mouth without any thought and causing him to blush. The omega grinned at him and Will reddened further.

*

Hannibal could not deny his curiosity about the alpha.

At first, his attraction to the hot dog stand had been exactly that - an attraction to the alpha serving the vile food stuff. Hannibal had had to admit to himself he had never been so drawn to an alpha before - his scent strong and clear even over the horrific odour of the hot dogs and fried onions. A clear match for him he was sure. He'd never had cause to believe in true mates before, but began to wonder if this wasn't exactly what the fairytales spoke of.

He had never in his life been so affected as to bring about the bashful blush across his cheeks those first few times. But as they talked and Will told him more about having essentially been lumbered with the stand and making the most of it, laughing at the situation in a carefree way that was clearly false - Hannibal warmed to him further. There was a sadness in the alpha that he felt might mirror his own. He was making the most of this situation he had apparently been left in, because he didn't know how else to function. That was something he had been clearly doing his whole life - getting on with it, striving forward and surviving. Whatever it took.

Hannibal both related to and admired this quality. It was perhaps this that finally helped him focus beyond the rather unsettling omegan qualities the alpha drew from him, to regain himself and ask the alpha to join him for dinner.

He regretted it instantly of course.

Overthinking in that omegan way he rarely did. But with good cause. He had often taken alphas as dates to restaurants he was to critique. Even those who knew what he did and the influence he had, often seemed overwhelmed by the way he was known and respected in the food industry. It was often offputting to them.

A strong, independent omega could unsettle even the most secure alpha. And… Hannibal found himself not wanting to do that with this alpha. There was so much potential between them, he was sure. He had hesitated to offer his name in case it was recognised, given that it *was* recognisable, but neither did he want to lie. So he gave it and there was no flicker of knowing it -

“I’m Hannibal… Lecter. Perhaps… shall we say seven p.m. at…” He trailed off as he tried to think of somewhere as remotely unpretentious as the alpha seemed and found that surprisingly difficult. “Or I could call on you…”

“No… Umm, we can meet here if you like? Go from here? I know a good place - a little bistro… nothing fancy but…”

“It sounds perfect.”

Their words overlapped a little as they both nervously cut each other off and then Hannibal waited expectantly as he said - “Alright, I’ll see you here at seven… um… Mr?”

“Will, Will Graham.” The alpha said, and he looked for a moment like he was about to offer a hand to shake before realising it was covered in some sort of condiment. So he just gave a sort of lopsided grin and curt nod that Hannibal found altogether too lovely.

*

Will had no idea why he had agreed to the date.

With a complete stranger who had already switched background stories in his head too many times. He would never normally play that little time wasting game on people he thought of more than acquaintances - it felt intrusive and rude. But it was too late now as the omega seemed to have somehow crossed the line from acquaintance into date in one short conversation.

Will pulled off and on another shirt as he tried to decide which one looked dressier. Not for the bistro - that place was relaxed and completely lacking in any kind of pretension. No, for the omega who he found he was sorely wanting to impress. Which was ridiculous - he had thought the man - Hannibal - out of his league back when he had thought of him as Jewel but even more so now.

The scent, though. That underlying and barely there scent that so many might not even recognise. *That* was what encouraged him.

In the end Will went with a neat plaid shirt and jeans, deciding last minute on a plain tie and shoving it in his pocket to decide later whether he would actually wear it or not. Was it too much? Hard to say with how well turned out the omega always looked just when buying hot dogs - imagine what he might look like on a date?!

Will was cutting it fine by the time he left his place, swapping his food truck for his beat up car and driving it back to his spot… before heading around the corner and parking the wreck out of sight. He walked back and arrived just as Hannibal did - also on foot. He wondered if he too had parked somewhere else in order to avoid judgement - the guy likely had a bentley.

Will tried to fight down the thoughts of being unwanted by such a well heeled omega - after all, what on earth could he offer? He managed to crush them in the end realising that such a line of thought sold the omega short as well as himself. Thinking he wasn’t good enough when it was the omega who had invited him to dinner, made a presumption about Hannibal

that wasn't fair. He did that too often, he knew. But the shitty childhood and then that split from Molly didn't help with his confidence.

Hannibal's smile lit his face when he saw Will and really that was all Will should need - even if he did have to make a point of ignoring the rather ostentatious suit the man was wearing. He pulled the tie from his pocket at started to put it on as they walked towards each other.

"The bistro has a dress code?" Hannibal asked as they came to a stop in front of each other.

"Huh? Oh, um… No. I just… I didn't want to show you up. You always look so smart and I'm just… too... casual?" Will tried to find the right word.

"I think you look just fine." Hannibal smiled the most predatory smile Will had ever seen on an omega. He didn't even have chance to respond verbally when Hannibal took the tie from his hands and slid it back off. "If you would permit your date an opinion? I enjoy the sight and scent of you, perhaps you would allow me to enjoy it throughout the evening."

Will's mouth went dry and he felt his skin flush at the omega's apparent desire for his throat and scent glands to remain exposed. He had never been shy of feisty omegas, but this guy was something else. And Will couldn't say he wasn't enjoying it. It had him wondering how much insight Hannibal had into him... Even so it took all he had to just nod mutely and then turn on his heel and offer his arm.

Hannibal took it with a grin and allowed Will to lead the way to the bistro.

*

The evening had been wonderful.

From the delicately plated started to the way Will relaxed more as the evening continued. To the shape of his mouth as he delighted in the rather messy dessert. Despite Hannibal preferring savoury, he found the idea of licking icing from Will's lip overwhelmingly enticing.

Hannibal had been worried at first that one of the waiting staff seemed to have a vague recollection of him, but they said nothing. And so without the weight of his identity hanging over him, Hannibal was able to enjoy the most relaxing and casual meal he'd had in a long time. The food was passable - enjoyable for the style and cost of the place - but it was the atmosphere and company that made it so much more enjoyable than any michelin star meal he'd ever had.

He thought a few times that he should tell Will about his job… about a lot of things, but he instead stuck with vagaries. In truth the topic didn't much come up as they built an easy and instant rapport with very little of importance divulged between them.

Even two weeks later when he had seen Will almost every day, he still said nothing. At this point they had had a couple more evening dates, and when possible Will would take a break and have coffee with Hannibal - putting up a -Back In Twenty- sign that had appeared on the food truck.

Now conversations were deeper - getting to know each other through stories of their pasts, aspiration for the future. Even when Will explained further the background of the hot dog truck - that he had gone into business with his previous omega only for her to get back together with the father of her child, leaving Will with nothing but overheads to repay - Hannibal had still remained vague about his own employment. The longer this went on the more impossible he found it to say anything. It shouldn't matter - at most Will might be mad or even slightly embarrassed once he realised Hannibal was a famous food critic. Perhaps he would laugh at the irony of their dating. But even so, it just never came out.

Not even after the kiss they finally shared after three weeks dating. Chaste but heated with the promise of more - around the side of the food truck as they said goodbye one lunchtime.

*

"Hey Abigail, how are you?" Will smiled at the young girl who waited tables at his favourite bistro and frequented his food truck every payday. She smiled at him and nodded.

"I'm good. I'm good. The usual please."

He nodded in return and started loading up her dog with chilli, watching as she looked curiously between Will and Hannibal who had been stood next the van chatting with Will. They'd been seeing each other a month and Will wasn't even trying to hide the fact that he was besotted. He just… needed to get up the nerve to broach the topic he kept from everyone else. That he didn't want to keep from Hannibal… that Hannibal might even share. That was the main reason he had insisted they take is slow. A few kisses, heated as they sometimes became, because in truth Will felt something between them that could be so much more. If his imagination was serving him well and revealing the truth of Hannibal, then Will wasn't sure he'd be able to hold off bonding the omega if he had the chance.

"I should let you get on with your work." Hannibal smiled sweetly and Will nodded his agreement even if he really didn't want to say goodbye. It always seemed hard when he just grabbed these ten minutes here and there.

"Well… take some lunch for later." Will said, wrapping a plain dog quickly and passing it over. Hannibal beamed and he leaned out of the truck to kiss that smiling mouth before the omega grinned at him, gave a nod to Abigail, and walked off.

When he went back to Abigail's food she was giggling like an idiot. He gave her a curious look.

"Oh my god Will, I can't believe you're dating the Chesapeake Ripper!"

Will frowned as he spooned onions onto her dog. "What? Who?"

"Hannibal Lecter. Famous food critic and total food snob! He's the guy that literally tore up a whole bunch of menus at that posh restaurant on Chesapeake Bay at the end of his meal! Someone told me he turned up at the Bistro with you… The chef was absolutely pretrified. He's been waiting for a review to appear ever since." She giggled again. "I'll have to let him

know he was just there as your date after all and there won't be a review. Right?" Her face fell for a moment. "He's not going to come back and rip up the menus or something is he?"

"I… I don't understand… What review?" Will wasn't sure what on earth she was talking about and felt the sudden urge to catch up to the omega and ask for an explanation from him directly. He might not have done so were it not for the sudden realisation of how vague Hannibal had always been over his job. At first it had just never come up but then he had just waved his hand and said he had a boring job as a freelance writer. When Will had pressed him for more information out of interest the reply had been "lifestyle pieces"

Will scooted out the back of the van without another word, nor putting his -back in twenty-sign up. He jogged in the direction that Hannibal had taken and when he turned the corner he could see the omega at a distance, further along the street. Passing a litter can… which he proceeded to drop the hot dog into.

Will's heart stopped. It wasn't like he had any pretensions over the food - it was basic street food and he didn't even rate it all that much himself. It was the best he could do with what he had, and so Hannibal not partaking would not have bothered him at all. What did bother him was the lie of it. If Hannibal was this apparent critic, he had worked hard to avoid telling Will such. And he had accepted food only to discard it - when he could have just declined it and Will would have not been offended. It was… rude.

Will had felt close to the omega, uncharacteristically sharing about his personal life when he usually wouldn't. Hannibal carrying on this subterfuge was upsetting and aggravating. He wasn't sure it affected his idea of who the omega was - of what he scented of him - but it gave him pause to think.

Perhaps Hannibal sensed him, and his burning ire, because he turned and met Will's eyes. He looked immediately pained - likely for having been caught out - and started towards Will. Will didn't wait, he didn't want to discuss anything with Hannibal whilst he was feeling so raw. Instead, he turned on his heel and went back to the truck. Hannibal was almost upon him as he finished pulling down the side shutter - much to the chagrin of several customers waiting - and got into the van. He pulled away leaving both Hannibal and his lunch crowd in his rear view mirror.

*

Hannibal definitely had cause for regret. He had tried calling Will several times and received no response. He thought it would be impolite to turn up at the man's house unannounced given that was likely the opposite of what Will wanted, but he longed to see him. Not that he could explain, he knew he had been in the wrong, he should have been honest. Will's food truck had not returned to its usual spot since that day, saddened would-be patrons joined Hannibal in the daily futile search for it.

He had never regretted much in his life, nor often been angry at himself, but this was a time for that. He couldn't understand it any further than to acknowledge, painfully, that he had been scared to let the alpha too close. At first out of habit, and then out of fear. Fear of rejection, or being seen as nothing but a monster if he knew the truth - despite everything his instincts, and nose, told him.

After two weeks the alpha finally responded to him. A text message. The sting of so little contact was there but Hannibal knew he deserved little more. He had seen something in Will, something of himself - someone that he could be open and honest with. So the irony that he had lost the man by not being open and honest burned.

~If my food at the truck isn't good enough for you, perhaps you would care to join me for a home cooked meal and see if that is more to your liking?

The message gave Hannibal a little hope. There was a note of Will's flirtation there, and surely he wouldn't invite Hannibal for dinner unless he was reaching out. Unless of course… Hannibal pushed aside the thought of how dangerous he was sure Will Graham was, it wasn't as if he was defenseless himself.

Hannibal decided to test the waters with his own message.

~I would love to join you for dinner. If it helps my cause, I usually give the hot dog to a homeless man on the next street, but he was absent that day.

~You're an asshole.

A few moments later a second text - **~My place tomorrow night. 7pm.** - and Will's address followed. Hannibal couldn't help but smile.

*

Will wondered, for the hundredth time that day, or possibly that hour, whether this was the best thing to do.

He had felt something with Hannibal, a connection he'd never had before. He had to wonder what his life might have been like if he'd met the omega years before. Maybe even when they were teens. How it might have been to connect with someone like this at that age and not grow up isolated in his own compulsions. And that was the reason, after two weeks of consideration and trying to decide whether or not to reveal this side of himself to Hannibal, Will had finally started cooking this dinner.

He took time preparing all the ingredients, some fresh, others frozen by necessity. He took the sort of care he imagined restaurants did when they realised Hannibal was dining there. But that wasn't why. He couldn't give a shit what Hannibal Lecter the food critic thought about his cooking. He only cared what Hannibal Lecter, potential spouse, thought.

Because that was something he had also had to admit to himself. Tentative kisses and chaste hand holding aside, he was pretty sure he wanted to bond with the man. Unless he was totally wrong about everything - which he was terrified might be the case - Hannibal was exactly the omega he had ever dreamed of.

And if he was wrong? He shuddered at the thought. Maybe Hannibal would be none the wiser, or maybe Will would have to… No, he would think about that possibility if it arose and only then.

*

Hannibal found Will's house to be quaint and rustic, nestled as it was on the edge of the woods in Wolf Trap. Nothing so grand as his own home but there was unmistakably something homely about it in a way the called to the omega in him. Something very *Will* about it that did the same.

When he arrived the house already smelled delightful and Will had clearly spent hours preparing the food. He opened the door with a grin and invited Hannibal in, with only a slight pause. A pause that Hannibal understood and felt as well - a hesitation whilst trying to discern what was going to happen - if they truly saw in each other what they felt they did.

Will took Hannibal's coat and lead him to the heavy oak dining table that dominated the kitchen-diner. Two mismatched chairs were present though there was room for at least six. Hannibal noted Will's slight blush at him looking at the chairs and decided not to ask and make Will feel awkward. He could guess well enough - a man who had little company and no need for more. Perhaps they were mismatched because the second chair had been acquired specifically for Hannibal's company. Hannibal felt both pleased and humbled by the possibility, especially after the hot dog incident.

This was a man like him - self made and self sufficient, with no need or want of company. At least that had been true of Hannibal until recently. Until he had met Will Graham.

He followed Will to the kitchen countertop where he was plating food.

"Will… I'm. I'm sorry. I should have told you-"

"That you hated my hot dogs or that you're a famous food critic?" Will asked with a mixture of annoyance and amusement. Hannibal hoped for the best but then the alpha huffed, turning his back to Hannibal as he continued to prepare food. His shoulders sagging as he said "what an idiot you must have thought me, for not knowing who you are."

"You know who I am Will." Hannibal replied without thought or hesitation.

Will turned then and studied Hannibal's face, as though searching for the truth in his words. The small smile that spread seemed to indicate he'd found it.

"I hope I do. I hope I can see the real you, and that you can see me too."

*

Will laid the various covered dishes on the table and invited Hannibal to sit before revealing them, somewhat pleased with the resultant smile on the critic's face. Amusement but not at Will's expense.

On the table was a spread of three different gourmet hot dogs. The sausages and bread made from scratch along with many of the side ingredients. Will had selected a variety from his repertoire - one straightforward dog with luxurious sides and sauces. One bacon wrapped dog

with a crisp salad, and a handmade twisted bun with sausage nestled in the dough. Each of the selection was a far cry from the hot dogs he served in the truck.

“I’m sure you might scoff at aspirations of an up-market food truck, but…” Will waved a dismissive hand. He actually didn’t care. That wasn’t what was important tonight. He found himself caring little for the designs he had - the ideas for the future of his truck that he had been working toward. Making the most of a bad situation, making a success of it - he hoped. And yet it all seemed meaningless in that moment.

“On the contrary, I am intrigued and eager to try.” Hannibal smiled, disarmingly.

Will couldn’t help but return the smile as he cut a little off of each as a sample and placed them on a plate which he handed to Hannibal. “Think of this as a starter, the main is something a little more… special.”

Hannibal gave a nod and then went about tasting the food in a way that he hadn’t when they had gone out to dinner. This was clearly Hannibal being the critic - correctly assuming that this was in part the expectation of Will for the evening.

He made no outward sign of enjoyment or dissatisfaction and Will settled to watch him. He touched none of the food himself as he allowed Hannibal to entertain with his show of trying each thoroughly. Will considered that at this point he might usually make a note of how the food was, some little notepad or likely an expensively bound journal.

Hannibal raised his napkin and dabbed the corners of his mouth before looking at Will. “Would you like my assessment?”

Will couldn’t help the spread of his grin. “No, not really. Though I’m guessing that they were somewhat more palatable than the usual fare, given that you didn’t immediately seek out some poor homeless individual to fob them off on.”

Hannibal quirked a brow, which made Will grin further. But he said nothing, simply stood and took the near empty plate out to the kitchen.

“Point taken.” Hannibal allowed. “But please don’t think I ever judged you on the quality of your hot dog.”

Will was still for a moment, standing at the kitchen counter and making a silent wish that what he was sure he felt from this omega was in fact real. He was taking a risk either way.

He picked up the small bowl and took it to the table, setting it in front of Hannibal, who looked up quizzically.

“No hot dog?”

“Oh, there’s sausage in there.” Will corrected. “Homemade, protein scramble. If the gourmet hot dogs are a success I want to branch out into other options - breakfast foods like this for example. I likely won’t use all of the same ingredients as I am this evening, they are… sometimes hard to come by. But I… this is special.” Will couldn’t meet Hannibal’s eyes and

he felt colour rise in his cheeks. He didn't want to admit this for what it was - a courting overture. Hannibal's reaction would decide what happened next.

Will dropped back down into his chair and after a moment looked up to see Hannibal inspecting the food with interest, discerning the ingredients and looking pleased.

"It seems simple, but from what you say I feel there is more to this than meets the eye." Hannibal commented and then forked some of the scramble, including a piece of delicately sliced sausage.

Will held his breath.

*

Hannibal had a very good sense of smell, even for an omega, and there had been something about Will Graham from the beginning. Perhaps it had added to his attraction to the alpha. Because beneath the layers of hot dog residue and terrible aftershave, there was something else ingrained. Something familiar and comforting that he would likely not find in many other alphas, not any he might care to meet at least.

Hannibal knew what that scent was but had put it aside in his mind so many times, after all considering Will's job there might be other explanations. He had tempered his hope.

But now. He felt his heart beat pick up, something it rarely did and never usually in times of stress. But this wasn't stress he realised. This was anticipation and longing. This was a test, and one that he knew he would pass.

"The meat has an interesting flavour. It's bracing. Notes of citrus." Hannibal mused after he rolled it around his mouth and swallowed.

Will looked at him - his eyes dark and intense in the low light. "My palate isn't as refined as yours." He spoke gently but Hannibal knew it was something of an invitation, a challenge.

"Apart from humane considerations, it's more flavorful for animals to be stress-free prior to slaughter. This animal tastes frightened."

"What does "frightened" taste like?" Will sounded a little breathless.

"It's acidic." Hannibal sighed out the word, caught in Will's gaze. There was something so utterly dangerous there that he was sure others might be frightened. He knew he should be.

"The meat is bitter about being dead." Will's lips tweaked into the slightest of smiles for a mere moment.

Hannibal couldn't help a grin at that, despite Will's almost detached tone throughout the discussion. A necessary distance for him in case, just in case… In case Hannibal recognised the flavour and was appalled by it.

"This meat isn't pork."

“It's long pig.”

Hannibal grinned.

*

Will let out a shuddering breath, relief and lust in equal measure.

Hannibal’s eyes glowed, almost red, in the low light. There it was, Will could see it, that feral beast he had known was there. Their bodies pressed together in a desperate need for each other, the food swept from the table and onto the floor as they had met across it.

“Tell me?” Will asked. “When did you know?”

“That you and I were the same? The moment I stepped close enough to discern the scent of blood on your hands. But I didn’t want to let myself hope it was the truth...” Hannibal practically purred, ripping a low growl from Will in response.

There was silence then despite so many questions hanging between them - their panted breath the only sound. Will wanted to know everything, and was sure Hannibal did too. He knew with time they would discuss it, how and when Hannibal first killed. How Will had started killing to take revenge for the murder of his mother when his father had been untroubled to do so, and had sought justice for others ever since. Some people were, in his estimation, no better than cattle and deserved to be treated as such. The idea of finding someone that might share that opinion and his proclivities flooded him with a warmth he’d never felt before.

The questions could remain hung for now, because there was a greater urgency in them both and Will was not going to deny it.

*

Hannibal let out a low moan as Will pulled then pushed, guiding him firmly but not roughly, until his back was flat on the table and Will was over him.

“Omega…” Will growled and leaned in to scent Hannibal’s neck, his throat and then up and along one arm, scenting each finger as he straddled Hannibal’s hips. He took each one into his mouth, gently sucking as though he might find some remnants of Hannibal’s last kill on them.

Hannibal could feel Will’s hardness pressing against him and the responding slick wetting his crotch and thighs. They had taken it so slow despite the pent up feeling that was clearly there - that could no longer be held back as the saw each other clearly.

No pretense or person suits. No edging around a truth they longed to reveal to the other.

“Take me alpha.” Hannibal moaned as he arched up into Will. His hands had been clutching at Will’s thighs, but now they sought his belt, making quick and desperate work of freeing him from his confines. Hannibal moaned again as he felt the hardness in his hands, the already swelling knot ready to fill him.

Will stilled at the touch, panting again as he tried to retain some control. That much was clear from his eyes, and Hannibal wondered if his blood lust looked the same. What it might be like to kill together, how it might feel to do this dripping in the blood of their victims.

“Knot me…” Hannibal purred roughly, deep from within his throat.

Hannibal gasped as it had the desired effect, Will pulling back from him and ripping open the omega’s trousers to claw them off. They were only as far down as Hannibal’s thighs when Will was back on him. Hannibal whined as he tried to spread his trapped legs, managing finally to get one leg free of the material - hearing the thud as his shoe hit the floor and he was able to open himself to the alpha.

Will growled as he tore at Hannibal’s underwear, leaving it in tatters as Hannibal writhed beneath him, slick coating his thighs and the table beneath. He needed Will desperately, needed everything about him - the blushing alpha that made him laugh, the killer beneath that he could see so clearly.

Will pushed into him roughly, making him cry out in welcome of it. Hannibal wanted to take Will deep and keep him there, longed for the alpha to knot him and bond with him.

Yes. That was the need he felt as the alpha fucked him so hard the table creaked and threatened to come apart. That burned within him and called out to the alpha that he knew was his mirrored half. Destined to be conjoined.

“Bite me, Will.” Hannibal growled. “Take me.”

Will moaned and said nothing, just buried his face in the crook of Hannibal’s neck as he slowed his thrusts, no less deep or hard, but leisurely. Hannibal arched further into the alpha as he took his pleasure.

Caught between them, Hannibal’s cock benefitted from the friction of Will’s press against him. He was almost lost to the pleasure of it, and then he was seeing stars. Will sank in his teeth at the same moment he pushed in his knot.

Hannibal cried out as he came. His cries turning to moans as Will continued to fuck him through it and into the next climax. Hannibal did lose himself to the pleasure then, feeling as though he was melting into the hard table surface as Will lapped the blood from his throat.

*

:: Critic known as the Chesapeake Ripper serves gourmet hot dogs ::

Hannibal - The Chesapeake Ripper - Lecter, appears to have retired from the food critic business in favour of serving at a gourmet hot dog stand with his new mate - food truck owner Bill Graham.

When asked to describe the rather extravagant street food on offer, one customer commented - “it’s beautiful.”

::In unrelated news:: Escaped convict Abel Gideon has been found dead and butchered in a way that local law enforcement have described as "professional". More news as we get it.

"Bill?"

"Yes."

"They called me Bill?" It irked Will more than a little, bringing back shitty memories of his equally shitty dad - William Graham Snr - who actually did go by Bill.

Hannibal clearly sensed the discomfort as his amused grin turned to something else - something no less amused but comforting and enticing.

"Shockingly rude!"

"No, Hannibal."

"But-"

"Hannibal! Aside from anything else, there isn't enough room in the fridge or freezer after Gideon."

"He takes up almost as much room as his ego." Hannibal replied gruffly.

Will tried to hide a grin at Hannibal's words that were clearly not meant as a joke. There was something adorable about how irritated Hannibal was at Gideon claiming their kills as his own - it had been non-stop in the headlines for months. Well, it had stopped now.

Will leaned across the chopping block - Gideon's leg between them - and kissed Hannibal lightly, tasting the spots of blood that had ended up there.

Will pulled back and grinned. "Hannibal, you really shouldn't watch the news if you find it so hard to digest."

"No, Will. Just… No."

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!